

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA COUNTY OF AVERY

The Avery County Board of Commissioners met in a Joint Meeting with the Avery County Board of Education on September 15, 2008 at 5:00 p.m.

Members Present: Kenny Poteat, Chairman; Susan Pittman, Vice-Chair; Phyllis Forbes; and Scott Heath

Members Absent: Dan South

Also Present: Robert Wiseman, County Manager; Tim Greene, Finance Officer; Martha Hicks, Commissioner Elect

Board of Education Present: Dr. Keith Eades, Superintendent; John Greene, Chairman; Jamie Johnson; Kathy Aldridge; Phillip Shomaker; Marty Dellinger; Diane Jaynes; Jeff Jaynes

Call To Order

Chairman Poteat stated that the Avery County Board of Commissioners had been in a brief recess from the Regular Meeting. Chairman Poteat reconvened the Regular Meeting at 5:00 p.m.

John Greene called the Avery County Board of Education to order.

Jamie Johnson, Avery County Board of Education Member, led prayer. Everyone in attendance stood and said the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

Chairman Poteat stated that he saw no problems with the agenda.

Jamie Johnson made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Motion unanimous with the Board of Education.

New Banner Elk School

Dr. Keith Eades, Superintendent of Avery County Schools, reported that documents had been prepared regarding the new Banner Elk School for the Board of Commissioners and these were handed out to the Board. Dr. Eades stated that when he came on board in July 2008 that he had met with the Central Services staff regarding the new Banner Elk School. Dr. Eades had sketches of the new Banner Elk School and discussed these sketches with the Board of Education and the Board of Commissioners. Robert Wiseman, County Manager, stated that the Board of Commissioners had discussed the possibility of selling the portion of that property called the Puckett property with the proceeds going to building of the new Banner Elk School. Chairman Poteat questioned if there had been discussion on the size of school to build in regards to student population. Dr. Eades advised that the core capacity was 250 students which meant there was enough space in the gym and dining area to accommodate 250 students. Dr. Eades stated that he had pulled some numbers for projections over the next 10 years to see where the Board of Education would need to be headed as far as facility needs and one of the data sources that was looked at revealed an increase of 80 students over a 10 year period district wide and one of the things that is being looked at is potential redistricting. Chairman Poteat questioned how many students at this point were projected for the new Banner Elk School. Dr. Eades stated that 150 to 175 students is projected not counting Pre-Kindergarten which has 18 enrolled at this point. Susan Pittman asked the total enrollment for this year at Banner Elk School. Diane Jaynes stated there was 174 students total at Banner Elk School. Discussion regarding the size of the gym and if the gym was an adequate size for the number of students. Phyllis Forbes pointed out that schools have been built but never included equipping the playground and then parents have to raise money for the equipment and she felt that this should be a part of building the school. Dr. Eades explained the timeline for design and construction of the new Banner Elk School. Discussion regarding the square footage and layout of the new Banner Elk School. Chairman Poteat questioned Tim Greene, Finance Officer, if he was aware of the \$10,000,000. The Finance Officer stated that \$7,000,000 had been put back two years ago for this project. Discussion regarding traffic flow at the new Banner Elk School.

ADM Technology Funds

Dr. Eades stated that earlier in the year the Board of Education had sent over a request to the Board of Commissioners for use of Technology funds and the Board of Education had lowered the request. Jeff Jaynes, Avery County Schools Finance Officer, advised that the Board of Education made a request in August for \$75,000 out of the ADM Fund for Technology. Mr. Jaynes reported that there was an adjustment made to the request and the request now was for \$65,095. Dr. Eades explained that one of the strategic goals is to look at the media program and strengthen that and to make sure that the teachers understand the current technology that is used in the classrooms.

Chairman Poteat questioned the current amount available in the ADM funds. Jeff Jaynes stated that there was \$132,669.68 and hopefully within the next month there would be \$70,000 to \$75,000 added to that after closing out the heating project at Avery High School that did not cost near the \$100,000 anticipated. Tim Greene advised that the deposits are made quarterly and that these funds are from corporate income taxes and the funds depend upon the economy.

Motion by Susan Pittman and second by Scott Heath to approve the \$65,095 coming from Public School Capital Building Funds. Unanimously approved with those in attendance (4-0).

North Carolina Virtual Public Schools

Dr. Eades reported that the North Carolina Virtual Public Schools program helps students take high school courses on-line such as foreign languages, mathematics, social studies, etc. This is good for districts like Avery County because one of the things that Avery County Schools are not able to do is offer an array of different courses because of lack of funding for teachers, explained Dr. Eades. Dr. Eades stated that even middle school students can do on-line courses and finish up the high school courses early and be able to take college courses while still in high school. Discussion regarding the North Carolina Virtual Public Schools. Dr. Eades advised that Avery County Schools were partnering with Mayland Community College discussing when students graduate from high school they could obtain an associates degree along with a high school diploma. Scott Heath questioned if the funding was based on enrollment. Dr. Eades answered that having home school children using this service would increase the enrollment numbers.

Funding Formula

Robert Wiseman, County Manager, stated that Dr. Eades, the County Manager, Avery County Finance Officer and Jeff Jaynes, Avery County Schools Finance Officer met last week and discussed the Funding Formula which is based on student population, consumer price index, etc. The County Manager advised that every year when the Board of Education presents the budget this would take a lot of the guess work out of the budget and what the Board of Education would get in their budget.

Land Transfer Fee

The County Manager explained that he felt that Avery County had a tremendous opportunity with the option of voting on the Land Transfer Fee. The County Manager stated that there were certain groups that wanted to take the right to vote on the Land Transfer Fee away from the people. The County Manager advised that this was not a tax on anyone's home but is a fee that is charged on the transfer of property by the seller. There is a senate bill sponsored by David Hoyle that would revoke the right of the people to vote on the Land Transfer Fee, said the County Manager. The County Manager explained that 73% of the people who brought property in Avery County in 2006/2007 are not permanent residents. Chairman Poteat reported that if Avery County invokes an additional sales tax it would affect 90% of Avery Countians every day and sometimes multiple times a day. Chairman Poteat stated that the Land Transfer Fee is a user fee and if someone gave their property to their children this fee would have no effect on them. The Board of Education members were unanimous in supporting the Land Transfer Fee and giving the people the option to vote on this issue. Martha Hicks, Commissioner-Elect, advised that the taxpayers need to know their option regarding this issue. John Green, Chairman of the Board of Education, stated that he believed time was of the essence here and that the Board of Education would like to play a big part in letting the people know about their options. The County Manager explained that we cannot tell the people how to vote but present the facts so that they have enough information to make a valid decision.

Recess for 2 minutes.

Traffic Flow at Avery High School and Avery Middle School

Scott Heath stated that he had asked to have the traffic flow problem at the Avery High School and Avery Middle School put on the agenda. John Greene said that the new members of the Board of Education had not discussed this item. Mark Garrett, principal at Avery High School, explained that he had a conversation with Chief Deputy Dallas Pate and Mr. Pate's suggestion was to have everyone turn right out of each site and that would keep traffic flowing but this would be inconvenience to some people. Mr. Garrett advised that the Sheriff and Chief Deputy Pate had committed resources for 2-3 days per week during the morning and afternoon periods that were so busy. Chairman Poteat advised that there was a discussion about this before and asked the Clerk to research the minutes regarding the issue of traffic flow at the Avery High School and Avery Middle School. Jeff Jaynes stated that turn off lanes had been researched but the Department of Transportation would not commit to doing this.

Meeting Space for the Board of Education

The County Manager stated that in a conversation with Dr. Eades the question of perhaps using the Commissioners Board Room for the Board of Education meetings was brought up. The County Manager

explained that the meeting place for the Board of Education was extremely small and sometimes the occasions could arise that more room would be needed. Dr. Eades stated that he had not discussed this matter with the Board of Education members but hoped it would be possible to use the Commissioners Board Room to accommodate larger audiences. Chairman Poteat said that the Board was not opposed to the use of the Commissioner Board Room.

Kathy Aldridge, Board of Education member, stated that she appreciated being able to meet with the Board of Commissioners.

Adjourn

Motion by Marty Dellinger and second by Kathy Aldridge to adjourn this meeting at 7:18 p.m.

Motion by Susan Pittman and second by Phyllis Forbes to adjourn this meeting at 7:18 p.m.

**Kenny Poteat, Chairman
Avery County Board of Commissioners**

Attest: _____
Cindy Turbyfill, Clerk